

they will pay skyrocketing oil bills to keep their homes and their families warm in the winter ahead. Hundreds have written to me with their concerns. I want to share a few e-mails and letters to illustrate the magnitude of this problem.

Amelia from Harrison, Maine, writes: "I am a 16-year-old girl. This summer, instead of being a teenager and having fun, I am staying home to take care of the house because my parents don't have time. My dad works three jobs and my mom works one to pay for the constantly rising prices of gas, food and oil. With my parents working four jobs, you would think we would have enough money to get by. We don't."

Marie from Gorham writes: "I am a single foster parent. I have two daughters with special needs. I am worried sick on how I am going to be able to pay \$500 or more every 3 to 4 weeks to heat my home. I can't look my foster daughters in their eyes and tell them I can't afford to keep them. We are their family."

Michael from Topsham wrote on behalf of his 87-year old father-in-law, who lives alone Auburn, Maine: "Last year his oil fuel cost was approximately \$6,400. He is a retired Army Reserve Master Sergeant with 20 years of service. His annual expenditure for fuel oil this year would likely be \$10,200. This would consume 85 percent of his annual income of \$12,000. Our elderly American citizens will be unable to financially manage these costs. Our government needs to intervene and help our elderly citizens during this unprecedented fuel crisis."

Marie, Amelia and Michael's stories are just a few examples of the human toll from soaring heating oil prices. More than 8 in 10 Mainers rely on oil to heat their homes. The average Maine household uses between 800 and 1,000 gallons of heating oil a winter. The median home income in Maine is \$43,000. At current prices, the average home will pay between \$3,700 and \$4,700 just to heat their homes. Many will spend more than \$5,000. This is more than 10 percent of the gross income for the median income household in 5 months. Coupled with soaring costs for gasoline, food and other essentials, people worry they may have to choose between heating their homes and feeding their families.

Madam Speaker, this Congress must act now before the winter freeze sets in. We need a new comprehensive energy policy to free ourselves from foreign oil. The people in Maine and America are suffering right now, and we need to provide them with immediate relief in the short term to help them get through the winter.

I have a plan to do just that. First, we must fully fund the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program, LIHEAP, and weatherization programs to help the poor, the disabled and the elderly on fixed income.

Second, we must provide relief for middle-class families fighting to make ends meet.

Last week, Carolyn McCarthy of New York and I introduced H.R. 6605, the Home Heating Fuels Cost Relief Act. Our legislation would provide a \$1,000 refundable tax credit for individuals, \$2,000 for families, toward the price of home heating oil, as well as a program to provide up to \$10,000 in low interest loans for families to weatherize their homes.

Third, soaring gas prices and heating oil prices are crippling small businesses like independent truckers and lobstermen. These businesses are the backbone of the Maine economy. I have introduced H.R. 2133, the Small Business Fuel Cost Relief Act, to create a tax credit for eligible businesses for any amount they spend on fuel, including gasoline, diesel, natural gas and heating oil, over the price on Labor Day 2004, adjusted for inflation.

Madam Speaker, families and small businesses in Maine and across America work hard for the money they spend on fuel. They deserve leadership in Washington that will act now to bring immediate relief from rising gasoline and heating fuel prices.

They also demand leadership to change direction and implement an energy policy that harnesses American ingenuity and entrepreneurship to reduce dependence on foreign oil, maximize conservation and efficiency, perfect alternative fuels and technologies, create jobs, and put America on the path to sustainable, affordable energy future. That is the task this Congress faces.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Ms. RICHARDSON). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from California (Mr. CALVERT) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. CALVERT addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

TRIBUTE TO SISTER LULA WALKER, FOUNDER OF TABITHA HOUSE SHELTER FOR BATTERED WOMEN AND CHILDREN

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. DAVIS) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. DAVIS of Illinois. Madam Speaker, I rise to pay tribute to one of the most caring, most willing to share, most sensitive and most delightful ladies that I have ever known. Sister Lula Walker was a rock in her family, in her church, in her community, in her city, and in her country. She was a deeply religious lady, highly motivated, willing to sacrifice, and fiercely determined. She did not know how to retreat, and she did not know how to take "no" for an answer.

Raised in a Christian home, she met and married her husband, Reverend Willie Walker, a Christian man who is an ordained elder in the Church of God in Christ Church. Together Sister

Walker, her husband Reverend Willie and their children have built a legacy of living and giving which will rarely be surpassed.

With little money and no public support, Sister Lula organized a ministry of providing for battered women and children. She named it Tabitha House, after the disciple Tabitha in Hebrew, or Dorcas in Greek. Tabitha was known for her good works, especially for helping widows and the poor.

Through her good works at Tabitha and in other ways, Sister Lula became the Mother Teresa of our community. Her work became so famous and well-known that she was invited to come to Washington D.C. and testify before Congress on the plight of women and children who are homeless and in need of shelter.

Sister Walker had several bouts of serious illness, but like Tabitha, or Dorcas, she was able to rise up and continue with her work. Finally, on Saturday, July 19th, 2008, Sister Lula could not rise anymore and graciously passed out of this life into another.

So, Madam Speaker, I take this opportunity to extend to Reverend Willie Walker and the Walker family, the Tabitha House family and the Church of God in Christ church family our heartfelt condolences and the great joy that I have experienced as a result of knowing and working with the Mother Teresa of our community, the neighborhood where I live, Sister Lula Walker.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Washington (Mr. McDERMOTT) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. McDERMOTT addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. CULBERSON) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. CULBERSON addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Kentucky (Mr. DAVIS) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. DAVIS of Kentucky addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. WELLER) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. WELLER of Illinois addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)